

community and in every bustling community across this Nation, families pull up to the gas tank, fill their tank with gas, and pay 18 cents a gallon to the Federal Government for transportation projects. But, unfortunately, each year Congress has allocated nearly a third less of the money than they have paid for the transportation projects.

Many of us stood up against that last year, even in the budget. We would not vote for the general budget, and we would not vote for the transportation budget, because the plan was to take \$65 billion out of the money that was to come back to the communities for their safe roads, and we held out.

Today we are going to have a vote to put the money back. We are going to have a vote to put the money back into communities for safe roads. Anybody who says they are for families and does not do something about the transportation projects is dooming them to spending hours in their cars instead of being home with their families.

The vote today is good. It is about the projects our communities need; about projects they need to keep their families safe and which will allow them to spend time with their families.

PRIORITY LEGISLATION NOT BEING PASSED

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, when the gentleman from Georgia (Speaker GINGRICH) promised a fair and open debate on campaign finance reform, it must have been an April Fools' joke. Unfortunately, it was not the only joke the GOP has played on the American people.

In the 40 legislative days that this body has been in session this year, the House has failed to pass bills that the Republican leadership claimed were priorities. The American people have had no disaster relief, no IRS reform, no budget resolution and no campaign finance reform.

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In addition, the Republicans have completely ignored other issues that the American public are clamoring for action on. They have had no managed care reform, and there is bipartisan support for managed care reform, no bills to improve our public schools, and no minimum wage increase.

Mr. Speaker, I only wish I could say this was an April Fools' joke. But it looks like the joke is on us and the American people.

BESTEIA WILL CREATE JOBS, KEEP NATION COMPETITIVE, AND SAVE LIVES

(Mr. LATOURETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, over 40 years ago, President Eisenhower made a deal with the American public. If folks would pay gasoline taxes when they bought gas, the government would build and maintain highways so that they could travel to work, so that we could maintain our position in the world and move goods to market, and so that Americans could travel with their families on safe transportation systems.

Sadly, during the 1960s, when the unified budget was used to hide the cost of the Vietnam conflict, the trust fund, and I want to emphasize the word "trust" fund, was used to mask the size of that overspending. Since that time, we have failed to keep faith with the Americans who pay the tax with the expectation that we will keep that deal made so long ago.

Today, we have the opportunity to keep the contract with the American public by passing BESTEA. BESTEA will create jobs, it will keep our Nation competitive, and it will save lives.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there is criticism in some quarters that BESTEA falls outside the budget deal of last year. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has worked hard to make sure that BESTEA not only comes within those budget caps but also restores truth in budgeting. It says that the Highway Trust Fund is a contract with the American people, and today we in this House must force Washington to keep its end of the bargain.

PASS BESTEA BILL AND INVEST IN NATION'S ECONOMY

(Mr. MASCARA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, one thing that get lost in the debate on BESTEA is the importance of our Nation's highway system. Nearly \$6 trillion worth of goods are shipped each year over our country's highways. Seventy-five percent of the total value of our Nation's commodities are shipped interstate over our national highway system.

Our economy depends heavily on our transportation system. Yet we are watching it while it crumbles. Our country has long neglected its infrastructure needs. The condition of our roads and highways continue to decline.

The Department of Transportation estimates that 59 percent of the Nation's highways are in disrepair. These road conditions, poor road conditions, cost American drivers over \$23 billion a year, or equivalent to \$132 for each driver.

Traffic on our highways has more than doubled in the past 25 years, while new road construction has stagnated. It is time to invest in our Nation's infrastructure. It is time to fix our roads. Join me in voting for H.R. 2400 and invest in our Nation's economy.

DOLLARS TO THE CLASSROOM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, can we talk about education in this country without talking about the most important recipients of education, our kids? Someone should explain to us how Federal studies like "Channeling Your Donna Reed Syndrome" or "Cement, the Concrete Experience", even studies on researchers researching their research techniques have anything to do with kids learning their ABCs or basic skills. This is exactly the kind of waste that is produced in the bloated bureaucracy here in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, instead of sending our Federal tax dollars to parents, teachers and local educators, the dollars get lost in the abyss of the bureaucracy and on Federal studies. The Committee on Education and the Workforce estimates that, on the average, only 65 cents of every Federal education dollar gets into the classroom.

We now have the opportunity to send our Federal education tax dollars directly to the classrooms of the Nation. The Dollars to the Classroom Act ensures that 95 cents of every Federal education dollar goes directly to the classroom, to the hands of someone who knows your child's name. Mr. Speaker, this means microscopes, computers, books and not bureaucrats. Let us send the dollars to the classroom.

DEMOCRATS UNVEIL MANAGED CARE REFORM LEGISLATION

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, today is April Fool's Day; and so it seems appropriate that the Republican leadership is having a rally to celebrate the achievements of the GOP Congress before Members leave Washington for the recess.

The Republican Congress has simply wasted time in 1998, producing no results to improve the lives of the average working American. Important issues like managed care reform, Medicare expansion for those 55 to 64, a minimum wage increase, school modernization and reduced class size have simply been neglected.

Democrats and President Clinton have prioritized these issues because they know they are important to the American people and will improve the quality of their lives. Just yesterday, Democrats unveiled their managed care reform legislative proposal with President Clinton's strong backing. But the Republican leadership, they just want to go home. They are incapable of addressing the issues of real concern to working Americans.

SUPPORT THE BESTEA BILL

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1